

BERNARD P. CARVALHO JR.
Mayor



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Mayor attends Japan-Hawai'i Economic Summit

LĪHU'E – Mayor Bernard Carvalho Jr. recently attended the first-ever Japan-Hawai'i Economic Summit on the Big Island along with other Hawai'i and Japanese leaders.

"Hawai'i has a great relationship with Japan that has been built over the years. The summit allowed us to strengthen our ties through face-to-face meetings. In addition, it was a great opportunity to explore new options that could lead to economic growth and the creation of jobs," said the mayor.

He noted that a range of topics was covered at the summit including resources and networks utilized by businesses to successfully establish new ventures, innovations in education that foster the development of leaders from an early age, and strategies to engage the next generation of visitors.

During the summit, Mayor Carvalho met Hiroshima Gov. Hidehiko Yuzaki and discussed an upcoming exchange between Hawai'i and Japanese little league teams.

"We are both very excited about our teams playing in goodwill games in Japan this summer. Our vision is to build a connection between our youth sports teams," said the mayor. He noted that the Kaua'i Yankees team will represent the Garden Isle at the games, which will be played in Hiroshima and Iwaki City.

Another exchange that the mayor had at the summit was with a Hokkaido business leader, Kenichi Goto, who is looking to expand his successful Snow Peak Japan business.

“He’s developing plans to bring Japanese tourists to Kaua’i for specialized eco-lifestyle tours, which will likely be a low impact venture,” said the mayor.

Mayor Carvalho also discussed the recent visit by students from Obihiro Hokkaido High School, who came to the Garden Isle to learn about agricultural projects firsthand.

The edutourism program enabled the students to immerse themselves in the local culture while focusing on agriculture.

In a lighter moment, the mayor led a group of people from Hokkaido in an impromptu group singing of a traditional Japanese folk song called “Furusato”.

One of the participants, who was moved to tears, shared that he hadn’t sang that song since he was in high school, and that it brought back a lot of memories for him.

Before leaving the summit, Mayor Carvalho invited everyone to come to Kaua’i for the next gathering.

Irene Hirano Inouye, wife of the late Sen. Daniel K. Inouye and president of the U.S.-Japan Council, helped to coordinate the event along with the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.



